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17292

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS ANTILLES DESIRE FOR NEGOTIATIONS
WITH VENEZUELA ON CONTINENTAL SHELF

REF: CARACAS 7502

1. PRESIDENT CALDERA IN WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 28, TO QUESTION ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NETHERLANDS ANTILLES ON CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY (REFTEL) ANSWERED THAT RELATIONS WITH NETHERLANDS ANTILLES AND NETHERLANDS CONTINUE MORE CORDIAL THAN EVER, RECALLED VISIT TO CURACAO LAST YEAR, AND SAID DESPITE HEADLINES IN LOCAL PRESS HE DOES NOT BELIEVE HOLLAND OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER PART OF VENEZUELA. PRESIDENT POINTED OUT THAT MATTER REVOLVES AROUND NEED TO ESTABLISH LIMITS OF CONTINENTAL SHELF, AND NOTED THAT INCLUDES NOT ONLY SHELF AND MARINE LIMITS BUT ALSO TERRITORIAL SEA AND POSSIBLY, IN LINE WITH CARIBBEAN LOS TALKS, PATRIMONIAL SEA. HE SAID VENEZUELA HAS NUMEROUS ISLANDS IN CARIBBEAN, AND THAT LINE OF VENEZUELAN ISLAND POSSESSIONS FROM LOS MONJES TO LOS TESTIGOS IS INTERRUPTED ONLY BY NETHERLANDS ANTILLES.

2. PRESIDENT SAID VENEZUELA HAS NEVER REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE. HOWEVER, HE SAID WITH REGARD TO STATEMENT ABOUT PRESSURE ON VENEZUELA THIS COUNTRY WILL NOT ACCEPT ANYONE'S OR ANY

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COUNTRY'S PRESSURES, NOR IS IT DISPOSED TO NEGOTIATE UNDER ANY POWER'S PRESSURES, AND SUCH NEWS REPORTS CREATE A HOSTILE CLIMATE FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, HE STATED HE ANTICIPATES PRESENT CONFUSION WILL BE CLEARED UP AND THAT IN FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL MANNER REQUIRED NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT WITH NEIGHBORS. PRESIDENT CUATONED THAT NO ONE IS TRYING TO TAKE VENEZUELAN LAND, SAID THAT DISCOVERY OF OIL IN GULF OF VELA MAKES IT NATURAL THAT THERE IS GREAT ECONOMIC INTEREST IN MARINE AREA BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND CURACAO, AND CONCLUDED THAT HE STANDS BY FORMULATION ORIGINALLY STATED BY ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER (REFTEL).

3. PRESS, OF COURSE, HAS FOCUSED ON PRESIDENT'S WORDS ABOUT NOT ACCEPTING PRESSURES. HOWEVER, PAPERS ALSO FEATURED DUTCH EMBASSY PRESS RELEASE WHICH SAID THAT ALTHOUGH NETHERLANDS ANTILLES CONSIDERS "URGENTLY DESIRABLE" DELINEATION OF CONTINENTAL SHELF LIMITS, THERE IS NO MENTION OF ANY PRESSURES. RELEASE RECOUNTS HISTORY OF REPEATED CALLS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH VENEZUELA AND SAYS SUCH NEGOTIATIONS ARE OF ESSENTIAL INTEREST TO NETHERLANDS ANTILLES FOR LONG-RANGE ECONOMIC PLANNING IN WHICH SUBSEA EXPLORATION PLAYS IMPORTANT PART. RELEASE CONTINUED THAT DISCOVERY BY VENEZUELAN STATE-OWNED COMPANY OF OIL BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND NETHERLANDS ANTILLES MAKES MATTER MORE URGENT AND MOTIVATED DUTCH GOVERNMENT TO APPROACH VENEZUELA ONCE MORE, AND SAID NETHERLANDS ANTILLES WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD, CONVINCED THAT THEY WOULD SERVE INTERESTS OF NETHERLANDS ANTILLES, NETHERLANDS, AND VENEZUELA. DISPATCHES CARRYING STATEMENT ON SUBJECT BY DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTRY IN THE HAGUE ALSO SAID REPORTS THAT NETHERLANDS ANTILLES HAD ASKED THE HAGUE TO PRESSURE VENEZUELA COULD NOT BE CONFIRMED. DEVINE
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